

CLASSICS FOR
CANADIAN
CHILDREN

Stories from
English History
No. 2



A. & W. MACKINLAY,
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No. II.

STORIES

FROM

ENGLISH HISTORY.

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A. & W. MACKINLAY,
HALIFAX, N. S.

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STORIES FROM ENGLISH HISTORY.

ALFRED THE GREAT.

ALFRED the Great was a young man, two-and-twenty years of age, when he became king. This great king, in the first year of his reign, fought nine battles with the Danes. He made some treaties with them too, by which the false Danes swore that they would quit the country. They pretended to consider that they had taken a very solemn oath, in swearing this upon the holy bracelets that they wore, and which were always buried with them when they died; but they cared little for it, for they thought nothing of breaking oaths and treaties too, as soon as it suited their purpose, and coming back to fight, plunder and burn, as usual. One fatal winter, in the fourth year of King Alfred's reign, they spread themselves in great numbers over the whole of England; and so dispersed and routed the King's soldiers that the King was left alone, and was obliged to disguise himself as a common peasant, and to take refuge in the cottage of one of his cowherds who did not know his face.

Here, King Alfred, while the Danes sought him far and wide was left alone one day, by the cowherd's wife, to watch some cakes which she

put to bake upon the hearth. But, being at work upon his bow and arrows with which he hoped to punish the false Danes when a brighter time should come, and thinking deeply of his poor unhappy subjects whom the Danes chased through the land, his noble mind forgot the cakes, and they were burnt. "What!" said the cowherd's wife, who scolded him well when she came back, and little thought she was scolding the King, "you will be ready enough to eat them by-and-by, and yet you cannot watch them, idle dog!"

At length, the Devonshire men made head against a new host of Danes who landed on their coast; killed their chief and captured their flag, on which was represented the likeness of a Raven—a very fit bird for a thievish army like that, I think. The loss of their standard troubled the Danes greatly, for they believed it to be enchanted—woven by the three daughters of one father in a single afternoon—and they had a story among themselves that when they were victorious in battle, the Raven stretched his wings and seemed to fly; and that, when they were defeated, he would droop. He had good reason to droop now, if he could have done anything half so sensible; for King Alfred joined the Devonshire men; made a camp with them on a piece of firm ground in the midst of a bog in Somersetshire; and prepared for a

great attempt for vengeance on the Danes, and the deliverance of his oppressed people.

But, first, as it was important to know how numerous those pestilent Danes were, and how they were fortified, King Alfred, being a good musician, disguised himself as a gleeman or minstrel, and went, with his harp, to the Danish Camp. He played and sang in the very tent of Guthrum the Danish leader, and entertained the Danes as they caroused. While he seemed to think of nothing but his music, he was watchful of their tents, their arms, their discipline, everything that he desired to know. And right soon did this great King entertain them to a different tune, for, summoning all his true followers to meet him at an appointed place, where they received him with joyful shouts and tears, as the monarch whom many of them had given up for lost or dead, he put himself at their head, marched on the Danish camp, defeated the Danes with great slaughter and besieged them for fourteen days to prevent their escape. But, being as merciful as he was good and brave, he then, instead of killing them, proposed peace, on condition that they should altogether depart from that part of England, and settle in the East; and that Guthrum should become a Christian, in remembrance of the Divine religion which now taught his conqueror, the noble Alfred,

to forgive the enemy who had so often injured him. This Guthrum did. At his baptism King Alfred was his godfather, and Guthrum was an honourable chief who well deserved that clemency ; for ever afterwards he was loyal and faithful to the King. The Danes under him were faithful, too. They plundered and burned no more, but worked like honest men. They ploughed and sowed and reaped, and lived good, honest English lives. And I hope the children of those Danes played, many a time, with Saxon children in the sunny fields, and that Danish young men fell in love with Saxon girls, and married them, and that English travellers, benighted at the doors of Danish cottages, often went in for shelter until morning ; and that Danes and Saxons sat by the red fire, friends, talking of King Alfred the Great.

All the Danes were not like those under Guthrum ; for, after some years, more of them came over, in the old plundering and burning way —among them a fierce pirate of the name of Hastings, who had the boldness to sail up the Thames to Gravesend, with eighty ships. For three years, there was a war with these Danes ; and there was famine in the country, too, and a plague, both upon human creatures and beasts. But King Alfred, whose mighty heart never failed him, built large ships nevertheless, with which to

pursue the pirates on the sea, and he encouraged his soldiers, by his brave example, to fight valiantly against them on the shore. At last, he drove them all away ; then there was repose in England.

As great and good in peace, as he was great and good in war, King Alfred never rested from his labours to improve his people. He loved to talk with clever men, and with travellers from foreign countries, and write down what they told him, for his people to read. He had studied Latin after learning to read English, and now another of his labours was to translate Latin books into the English-Saxon tongue, that his people might be interested, and improved by their contents. He made just laws, that they might live more happily and freely ; he turned away all partial judges that no wrong might be done them ; he was so careful of their property, and punished robbers so severely, that it was a common thing to say that under the great King Alfred, garlands of golden chains and jewels might have hung across the street, and no man would have touched one. He founded schools, he patiently heard causes himself in his Court of Justice ; the great desires of his heart were, to do right to all his subjects, and to leave England better, wiser and happier in all ways than he found it. His industry in these efforts

was quite astonishing. Every day he divided into certain portions, and in each portion devoted himself to a certain pursuit. That he might divide his time exactly, he had wax torches or candles made, which were all of the same size, were notched across at regular distances, and were always kept burning. Thus, as the candles burnt down, he divided the day into notches, almost as accurately as we do now divide it into hours upon the clock. But, when the candles were first invented, it was found that the wind and draughts of air, blowing into the palace through the doors and windows, and through the chinks in the walls, caused them to gutter and burn unequally. To prevent this, the King had them put into cases formed of wood and white horn. And these were the first lanterns ever made in England.

All this time, he was afflicted with a terrible unknown disease, which caused him violent and frequent pain that nothing could relieve. He bore it, as he had borne all the troubles of his life, like a brave, good man, until he was fifty-three years old ; and then having reigned thirty years, he died. He died in the year nine hundred and one ; but, long ago as that is, his fame, and the love and gratitude with which his subjects regarded him, are freshly remembered to the present hour.

Under the great Alfred, all the best points of the English-Saxon character were first encouraged

and in him first shown. It has been the greatest character among the nations of the earth. Wherever the descendants of the Saxon race have gone, have sailed, or otherwise made their way, even to the remotest regions of the world, they have been patient, persevering, never to be broken in spirit, never to be turned aside from enterprises on which they have resolved. In Europe, Asia, Africa, America, the whole world over ; in the desert, in the forest, on the sea ; scorched by a burning sun, or frozen by ice that never melts ; the Saxon blood remains unchanged. Wheresoever that race goes, there law and industry and safety for life and property, and all the great results of steady perseverance, are certain to arise.

I pause to think with admiration of the noble king who, in his single person, possessed all the Saxon virtues. Whom misfortune could not subdue, whom prosperity could not spoil, whose perseverance nothing could shake. Who was hopeful in defeat and generous in success. Who loved justice, freedom, truth and knowledge. Who, in his care to instruct his people, probably did more to preserve the beautiful old Saxon language, than I can imagine. Without whom, the English tongue in which I tell this story, might have wanted half its meaning. As it is said that his spirit still inspires some of our best English laws ; so let you and me pray that it may animate

our English hearts, at least to this—to resolve, when we see any of our fellow-creatures left in ignorance, that we will do our best, while life is in us, to have them taught ; and to tell those rulers whose duty it is to teach them, and who neglect their duty, that they have profited very little by all the years that have rolled away since the year nine hundred and one ; and that they are far behind the bright example of King Alfred the Great.

CHARLES DICKENS.

—“ *Child's History of England.* ”

NOTE.—A statue of King Alfred the Great has been erected at Wantage, in Berkshire. At the foot of the statue is the following inscription : “ Alfred found learning dead, and he restored it. Education neglected, and he revived it. The laws powerless, and he gave them force. The Church debased, and he raised it. The land ravaged by a fearful enemy, from which he delivered it. Alfred's name will live as long as mankind shall respect the past.” Oct. 28th (?), 1901, is the thousandth anniversary of King Alfred's death.

THE BATTLE OF SENLAC, 1066.

THE LAST STAND OF THE ENGLISH.

And now the whole of William's mighty host, covering the field, till its lines seemed to blend with the gray horizon, came on, serried, steadied, orderly—to all sides of the entrenchment.

Aware of the inutility of his horse, till the breast works were cleared, William placed in the van all his heavy armed foot, spearmen and

archers, to open the way through the palisades, the sorties from which had now been carefully closed.

As they came up the hills, Harold turned to Haco and said: "Where is thy battle-axe?" "Harold," answered Haco, with more than his usual tone of sombre sadness, "I desire now to be thy shield bearer, for thou must use thine axe with both hands while the day lasts, and thy shield is useless. Wherefore, thou strike, and I will shield thee."

"Thou lovest me, then, son of Sweyn; I have sometimes doubted it."

"I love thee as the best part of my life, and with thy life ceases mine; it is my heart that my shield guards when it covers the breast of Harold."

"I would bid thee live, poor youth," whispered Harold: "but what were life if this day were lost? Happy, then, will those be who die."

Scarce had the words left his lips ere he sprang to the breast-works, and with a sudden sweep of his axe, down dropped a helm that peered above them. But helm after helm succeeds. Now they come on, swarm upon swarm, as wolves on a traveller, as bears round a bark. Countless, amidst their carnage, on they come! The arrows of the Normans blacken the air; with deadly precision, to each arm, each limb, each front exposed

above the bulwarks—whirrs the shaft. They clamber the palisades, the foremost fall dead under the Saxon axe; new thousands rush on; vain is the might of Harold—vain had been a Harold's might in every Saxon there! The first row of breast-works is forced—it is trampled, hewed, crushed down, cumbered with the dead. "Ha Rou! Ha Rou! Notre Dame! Notre Dame!" sounds joyous and shrill, the chargers snort and leap, and charge into the circle. High wheels in air the great mace of William; bright by the slaughterers flashes the crozier of the Church.

"On, Normans! Earldom and land!" cries the Duke. "On, Sons of the Church! Salvation and Heaven!" shouts the voice of Odo.

The first breast-work down—the Saxons yielding inch by inch, foot by foot, are pressed, crushed back, into the second enclosure. The same rush, and swarm, and fight, and cry, and roar. The second enclosure gives way. And now in the centre of the third—lo, before the eyes of the Normans, towers proudly aloft, and shines in the rays of the westering sun, brodered with gold, and blazing with mystic gems, the standard of England's King! And there are gathered the reserve of the English host; there, the heroes who had never yet known defeat—unwearied they by the battle—vigorous, high hearted still; and round them the breast-works were thicker, and

stronger, and higher, and fastened by chains to pillars of wood and staves of iron, with the wagons and carts of the baggage, and piled logs of timber—barricades at which even William paused aghast.

Before that standard, in the front of the men, stood Gurth and Leofwine and Haco and Harold, the last leaning for rest upon his axe, for he was sorely wounded in many places and the blood oozed through the links of his mail.

Live, Harold : live yet, and Saxon England shall not die !

The English archers had at no time been numerous ; most of them had served with the vanguard, and the shafts of those within the ramparts were spent ; so that the foe had time to pause and to breathe. The Norman arrows meanwhile flew fast and thick, but William noted to his grief that they struck against the tall breast-works and barricades, and so failed in the slaughter they should inflict. He mused a moment, and sent one of his knights to call to him three of the chiefs of the archers. They were soon at his side. " See ye not," said the Duke, " that your shafts and bolts fall harmless on those osier walls. Shoot in the air ; let the arrow fall perpendicular on those within—fall as the vengeance of the saints falls—direct from heaven ! Give me thy bow, archer—

thus." He drew the bow as he sat on his steed ; the arrow flashed up, and descended in the heart of the reserve, within a few feet of the standard.

"So ; that standard be your mark," said the Duke, giving back the bow.

The archers withdrew. The order circulated through their bands, and in a few moments more down came the iron rain. It took the English host as by surprise, piercing hide cap and even iron helm ; and in the very surprise that made them instinctively look up—death came.

A dull groan as from many hearts boomed from the entrenchments on the Norman ear. "Now," said William, "they must either use their shields to guard their heads—and their axes are useless—on while they smite with the axe they fall by the shaft. On now to the ramparts. I see my crown already resting on yonder standard !

Yet, despite all, the English bear up. The sun sinks nearer and nearer toward the red horizon. "Courage !" cries the voice of Harold, "hold but till nightfall, and ye are saved. Courage and freedom !"

"Harold and Holy Crosse !" is the answer. Still foiled, William resolves to hazard a fatal stratagem. He marked that quarter of the enclosure which was most remote from the chief point of attack—most remote from the provident watch of Harold, whose cheering voice, ever and

anon, he recognized amidst the hurtling clamour. In this quarter the palisades were the weakest, and the ground the least elevated ; but it was guarded by men on whose skill with axe and shield Harold placed the firmest reliance—the Anglo-Danes of his old East-Anglian earldom.

Thither, then, the Duke advanced a column of his heavy armed foot, which, after a short, close and terrible conflict, succeeded in making a wide breach in the breast-works. But that temporary success only animates yet more the exertions of the defenders, and swarming round the breach, and pouring through it, line after line of the foe drop beneath their axes. The column of the heavy armed Normans fall back, down the slopes—they give way—they turn in disorder—they retreat—they fly ; but the archers stand firm, midway on the descent—those archers seem an easy prey to the English—the temptation is irresistible. Long galled, and harassed, and maddened by the shafts, the Anglo-Danes rush forth at the heels of the Norman swordsmen, and sweeping down to exterminate the archers, the breach that they leave gapes wide.

“Forward,” cries William, and he gallops towards the breach.

On rush the Norman knights. But Harold is already in the breach, rallying round him hearts eager to replace the shattered breast-works.

"Close shields ! Hold fast !" shouted his king's voice.

Before him were the steeds of Bruse and Grantmesnil. At his breast, their spears ; Haco held over the breast the shield. Swinging aloft with both hands his axe, the spear of Grantmesnil shattered in twain by the King's stroke. Cloven to the skull rolls the steed of Bruse, Knight and steed roll on the bloody sward.

But a blow from the sword of DeLacy had broken down the guardian shield of Haco. The son of Sweyn is stricken to his knee.

With lifted blades and swirling maces the Norman knights charge through the breach.

"Look up, look up, and guard thy head," cries the fatal voice of Haco to the King.

At that cry the King raises his flashing eyes. Why halts his stride ? Why drops the axe from his hand ? As he raised his head, down came the hissing death-shaft. It smote the lifted face ; it crushed into the dauntless eyeball. He reeled, he staggered, he fell back several yards, at the foot of his gorgeous standard.

With desperate hand he broke the head of the shaft, and left the barb, quivering in the anguish.

Gurth knelt over him.

"Fight on," gasped the King, "conceal my death ! Holy Crosse ! England to the rescue ! woe ! woe !"

Rallying himself a moment, he sprang to his feet, clenched his right hand, and fell once more—a corpse.

At the same moment a rush of horsemen towards the standard bore back a line of Saxons, and covered the body of the King with heaps of the slain.

His helmet cloven in two, his face all streaming with blood, but still calm in its ghastly hues, amidst the foremost of those slain, fell the fated Haco. He fell with his head on the breast of Harold, kissed the bloody cheek with bloody lips, groaned and died.

Inspired by despair, with superhuman strength, Gurth, striding over the corpses of his kinsmen, opposed himself singly to the knights. Not one Englishman fled; all now centring round the standard, they fell, slaughtering if slaughtered.

Through the crowd, the Normans beheld with admiring awe,—here in the front of their horse, a single warrior, before whose axe spear shivered, helm drooped—there, close by the standard, standing breast-high among the slain, one still more formidable, and even amidst ruin unvanquished. The first fell at length under the mace of Roger de Montgomery.

Still by the enchanted standard stands the other; still the enchanted standard waves aloft,

with its brave ensign of the solitary "Fighting Man," gilded by the gems that had flashed in the Crown of Odin.

"Thine be the honour of lowering that haughty flag," cried William, turning to one of his favourite and most famous knights, Robert de Tesson. Overjoyed, the knight rushed forth, to fall by the axe of that stubborn defender.

"Sorcery," cried Fitzosborne, "sorcery. This is no man, but fiend."

"Spare him, spare the brave," cried in a breath Bruse, D'Aincourt, and DeGraville. William turned round in wrath at the cry of mercy, and spurring over all the corpses, he came to the foot of the standard, and for one moment there was single battle between the Knight-Duke and the Saxon hero. Nor, even then, conquered by the Norman sword, but exhausted by a hundred wounds, that brave chief fell, and the falchion vainly pierced him, falling. So, last man at the standard, died Gurth."

The sun had set, the first star was in heaven, the "Fighting Man" was laid low, and on that spot where now, all forlorn and shattered, amidst stagnant water, stands the altar-stone of Battle Abbey, rose the glittering dragon that surmounted the consecrated banner of the Norman victor.

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON.

—"Harold, *The Last of the Saxon Kings.*"

KING RICHARD AND SALADIN.

NOTE.—Richard Cœur de Lion, with Philip of France and other European princes went upon the third Crusade, A.D. 1190. It is during a truce between the Christian forces and the famous Sultan, Saladin, that the following event is supposed to have taken place.

“ Richard now assumed the foremost place in his troop, aware that Saladin himself was approaching. Nor was it long when, in the centre of his body-guard, surrounded by his domestic officers, and those hideous negroes who guard the eastern harem, and whose misshapen forms are rendered yet more frightful by the richness of their attire, came the Soldan, with the look and manners of one on whose brow nature had written, This is a King! In his snow-white turban, vest, and white eastern trousers, wearing a sash of scarlet silk, Saladin might have seemed the plainest dressed man in his own guard. But closer inspection discerned in his turban that inestimable gem, which was called by the poets, “The Sea of Light,” the diamond on which his signet was engraved, and which he wore in a ring, was probably worth all the jewels of the English crown, and a sapphire, which terminated the hilt of his caujar, was not of much inferior value. It should be added that to protect him from the dust, which, in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, resembles

the finest ashes, or, perhaps, out of oriental pride the Soldan wore a sort of veil attached to his turban which partly obscured the view of his noble features. He rode a milk-white Arabian, which bore him as if conscious and proud of his noble burden.

There was no need of farther introduction. The two heroic monarchs, for such they both were, threw themselves at once from horseback, and the troops halting and the music suddenly ceasing they advanced to meet each other in profound silence, and after a courteous inclination on either side, they embraced as brethren and equals. The pomp and display upon both sides attracted no farther notice—no one saw aught save Richard and Saladin, and they two beheld nothing but each other. The Soldan was the first to break silence: “The Melech Ric is welcome to Saladin as water to this desert! Will not my brother pass to the tent which his servant has prepared for him? My principal black slave hath taken order for the reception of the Princesses,—the officers of my household will attend your followers, and myself will be the chamberlain of the royal Richard.”

He led the way accordingly to a splendid pavilion, where was everything that royal luxury could devise. De Vaux, who was in attendance, then removed the long riding-cloak which Richard

wore, and he stood before Saladin in the close dress which showed to advantage the strength and symmetry of his person, while it bore a strong contrast to the flowing robes which disguised the thin frame of the Eastern Monarch. It was Richard's two-handed sword that chiefly attracted the attention of the Saracen, a broad, straight blade, the seemingly unwieldy length of which extended well nigh from the shoulder to the heel of the wearer.

"Had I not," said Saladin, "seen this brand flaming in the front of the battle, like that of Azrael,¹ I had scarce believed that human arm could wield it. Might I request to see the Melech Ric strike one biow with it in peace, and in pure trial of strength?"

"Willingly, noble Saladin," answered Richard. and looking round for something whereon to exercise his strength, he saw a steel mace, held by one of the attendants, the handle being of the same metal, and about an inch and a half in diameter—this he placed on a block of wood.

The anxiety of DeVaux for his master's honour led him to whisper in English—"For the blessed Virgin's sake, beware what you attempt, my liege; your full strength is not as yet returned—give no triumph to the infidel."

¹*Azrael* - the Angel of Death.

"Peace, fool!" said Richard, standing firm on his ground, and casting a fierce glance around. "thinkest thou that I can fail in *his* presence?" The glittering broadsword, wielded by both his hands, rose aloft to the King's left shoulder, circled round his head, descended with the sway of some terrific engine, and the bar of iron rolled on the ground in two pieces, as a woodsman would sever a sapling with a hedging-bill.

"By the head of the Prophet, a most wonderful blow," said the Soldan, critically and accurately examining the iron bar which had been cut asunder; and the blade of the sword was so well tempered as to exhibit not the least token of having suffered by the feat it had performed. He then took the King's hand, and looking on the size and muscular strength which it exhibited, laughed as he placed it beside his own, so lank and thin, so inferior in brawn and sinew.

"Ay, look well," said DeVaux, in English, "it will be long ere your long jackanapes fingers do such a feat with your fine gilded reaping hook there."

"Silence, DeVaux," said Richard; "by our Lady, he understands or guesses thy meaning—be not so broad, I pray thee."

The Soldan, indeed, presently said,—"Some thing I would fain attempt—though, wherefore

should the weak show their inferiority in presence of the strong? Yet, each land hath its own exercises, and this may be new to the Melech Ric.”—

So saying, he took from the floor a cushion of silk and down, and placed it upright on one end.

“Can thy weapon, my brother, sever that cushion?” he said to King Richard.”

“No, surely,” replied the King; “no sword on earth, were it the Excalibur of King Arthur, can cut that which opposes no steady resistance to the blow.”

“Mark, then,” said Saladin; and tucking up the sleeve of his gown, showed his arm; thin indeed, and spare, but which constant exercise had hardened into a mass consisting of nought but bone, brawn and sinew. He unsheathed his scimitar, a curved and narrow blade, which glittered not like the swords of the Franks, but was, on the contrary, of a dull blue colour, marked with millions of meandering lines, which showed how anxiously the weapon had been welded by the armourer. Wielding this weapon, apparently so inefficient when compared to that of Richard, the Soldan stood resting his weight upon his left foot, which was slightly advanced; he balanced himself a little, as if to steady his aim, then stepping at once forward, drew the scimitar across the cushion, applying the edge so dexterously, and with so

little apparent effort, that the cushion seemed rather to fall asunder than to be divided by violence.

“It is a juggler’s trick,” said DeVaux, darting forward, and snatching up the portion of the cushion which had been cut off, as if to assure himself of the reality of the feat,—“there is gramarye¹ in this.”

The Soldan seemed to comprehend him for he undid the sort of veil which he had hitherto worn, laid it double along the edge of his sabre, extended the weapon edgeways in the air, and drawing it suddenly through the veil, although it hung on the blade entirely loose, severed that also into two parts, which floated to different sides of the tent, equally displaying the extreme temper and sharpness of the weapon, and the exquisite dexterity of him who used it.

“Now, in good faith, my brother,” said Richard, “thou art even matchless at the trick of the sword, and right perilous were it to meet thee! Still, however, I put some faith in a downright English blow, and what we cannot do by sleight, we eke out by strength.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

¹*Gramarye*—magic.

*HOW KING JOHN OF FRANCE WAS
TAKEN PRISONER AT THE
BATTLE OF POITIERS.*

NOTE —In the Battle of Poitiers, 1356, the English defeated the French.

The English continued the pursuit of the enemy even to the City of Poitiers, where there was great slaughter, both of men and horses, for the inhabitants had shut the gates and would suffer none to enter. There was much pressing at this time, through eagerness to take the King; and those who were nearest to him and knew him, cried out, "Surrender yourself, or you are a dead man." In that part of the field there was a young Knight from St. Omer, who had been for three years in the service of the King of England. He said to the King in good French, "Sire, Sire, surrender yourself." The King, turning to him, asked, "To whom shall I surrender myself? Where is my cousin, the Prince of Wales? If I could see him, I would speak to him." "Sire," replied the young Knight, "he is not here; but surrender yourself to me, and I will lead you to him." "Who are you?" said the King. "Sire, I am Denys de Morbeque, a Knight from Artois; but I serve the King of England, because I cannot belong to France, having forfeited all I possessed

there." The King then gave him his right-hand glove, and said, "I surrender myself to you."

The Prince of Wales asked his two Marshals if they knew anything about the King of France. They replied, "No sir, nothing for a certainty, but we believe he must be either killed or taken prisoner." The Prince, then addressing the Earl of Warwick and Lord Cobham, said, "I beg of you to mount your horses and ride over the field, so that on your return you may bring me some certain news concerning him."

The two barons at once mounted their horses, and made for a small hillock, that they might look about them. They saw a crowd of men-at-arms on foot, advancing very slowly. The King of France was in the midst of them, and in great danger, for the English and Gascons had taken him from Sir Denys de Morbeque, and were disputing who should have him, some bawling out, "It is I that have got him." "No, no," cried others, "we have him." The King, to escape from this perilous situation, said, "I pray you, gentlemen, to conduct me and my son, in a courteous manner, to my cousin the Prince, and do not make so great a riot about my capture, for I am a great lord and I can make you all rich." These words, and others which fell from the King, quieted them a little; but the disputes were always

beginning again, and the men did not move a step without rioting.

When the two barons saw this troop of men, they came down from the hillock, and sticking spurs into their horses, made up to them. They pushed through the crowd by main force, and ordered all to draw aside. They commanded in the name of the Prince that every one should keep his distance, and none approach unless ordered to do so. All then retreated behind the King, and the two barons, dismounting, advanced to the royal prisoner with deep reverence, and conducted him in a peaceable manner to the Prince of Wales.

SIR JOHN FROISSART.

*THE COURTESY OF THE BLACK PRINCE
TO HIS PRISONER, KING JOHN
OF FRANCE.*

When evening was come, the Prince of Wales gave a supper in his pavilion to the King of France, and to a great many of the Princes and Barons who were prisoners. The Prince seated the King of France and his son, the Lord Philip, at an elevated and well-covered table ; with them were several great Lords. The other Knights and Squires were placed at different tables.

The Prince himself served the King's table, as well as the others, with every mark of humility, and would not sit down at it, in spite of all his entreaties for him so to do, saying that he was not worthy of such an honour, nor was it right for him to sit at the table of so great a King, or of so valiant a man as he had shown himself to be that day. He added also with a noble air : " Dear sir, do not make a poor meal because the Almighty God has not granted you your desires in the event of this day : for be assured that my lord and father will show you every honour and friendship in his power, and will arrange your ransom so reasonable that you will henceforward always remain friends. I think that you have cause to be glad that the success of this battle did not turn out as you desired ; for you have this day gained such high renown for valour that you have surpassed all the best Knights on your side. I do not, sir, say this to flatter you ; for all those of our side who have seen the actions of each party have allowed this to be your due, and decree you the prize and garland for it." At the end of this speech there were murmurs of praise heard from every one ; and the French said that the Prince had spoken nobly and truly, and that he would be one of the most gallant princes in Christendom, if God should grant him life to pursue his career of glory.

SIR JOHN FROISSART.

THE KNIGHT'S TOMB.

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn ?

Where may the grave of that good man be ?

By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,

Under the twigs of a young birch tree !

The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,

And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,

And whistled and roared in the winter alone,

Is gone,—and the birch in its stead is grown.—

The Knight's bones are dust,

And his good sword rust ;—

His soul is with the Saints, I trust.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

THE SURRENDER OF CALAIS, 1347.

The Siege of Calais lasted a long time, and many noble feats of arms and adventure were done. Several times the King of France tried to raise the siege, but Edward had so guarded the passes that he could not possibly get near the town. The people of Calais all this time suffered very greatly from want of food ; and when they found that there were no hope of succour, they begged the Governor to surrender the place upon condition that their lives were spared. Edward at first was not willing to promise to spare any citizen's life, but at

last, the brave Sir Walter Manny persuaded him to pardon all but six. These six were to be chosen from the principal citizens, and they were to come out to the King with their heads and feet bare, with ropes round their necks, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands.

Sir Walter Manny returned to the Governor, the Lord de Vienne, who was waiting for him on the battlements, and told him all that the King had said. "I beg of you," said the Governor, "that you will be so good as to wait here a little, while I go and tell all that has passed to the townsmen." He went to the market-place and caused the bell to be rung ; upon which all the people, men and women, came to the Town-hall. He then told them the answer he had received from the King of England. This news caused the greatest sorrow and despair, so that the hardest heart would have had pity on them. Even the Lord de Vienne wept bitterly.

After a short time, the most wealthy citizen of the town, Eustace de St. Pierre, stood up and said "Gentlemen, both high and low, it would be a very great pity to suffer so many people to die through famine, if any way could be found to prevent it ; and it would be highly meritorious in the eyes of our Saviour, if such misery could be averted. I have such faith and trust in finding

grace before God, if I die to save my townsmen, that I name myself as first of the six." When Eustace had done speaking, they all rose up, and almost worshipped him ; many cast themselves at his feet with tears and groans. Another citizen, very rich and respected, rose up, and said he would be the second to his companion Eustace ; his name was John Daire. After him, James Wisant, who was very rich in merchandise and lands, offered himself as companion to his two cousins ; as did Peter Wisant, his brother. Two others then named themselves, which completed the number demanded by the King of England. The Lord John de Vienne then mounted his horse, for it was with difficulty that he could walk, and conducted them to the gate. There was the greatest sorrow and lamentation all over the town ; and in such manner were they attended to the gate, which the Governor ordered to be opened, and then shut upon him and the six citizens, whom he led to the barriers, and said to Sir Walter Manny, who was there waiting for him, " I deliver up to you, as Governor of Calais, with the consent of the inhabitants, these six citizens, and I swear to you that they were and are at this day, the most wealthy and respectable inhabitants of Calais. I beg of you, gentle sir, that you would have the goodness to beseech the King, that they may not be put to

death." "I cannot answer for what the King will do with them," replied Sir Walter, "but you may depend that I will do all in my power to save them." The barriers were opened, when these six citizens advanced towards the pavilion of the King, and the Lord de Vienne re-entered the town.

When Sir Walter Manny had presented these six citizens to the King, they fell upon their knees and said, "Most gallant King, see before you six citizens of Calais, who have been rich merchants, and who bring you the keys of the castle and of the town. We surrender ourselves to your absolute will and pleasure, in order to save the remainder of the people of Calais, who have suffered much distress and misery. Condescend, therefore, out of your nobleness of mind, to have mercy and compassion upon us." All the Barons, Knights and Squires, that were assembled there in great numbers, wept at this sight. The King eyed them with angry looks, for he hated much the people of Calais (for the great losses he had formerly suffered from them at sea), and ordered their heads to be stricken off. All present entreated the King, that he would be more merciful to them; but he would not listen to them. Then Sir Walter Manny said, "Ah, gentle King, let me beseech you to restrain your anger. People say that you have great nobleness of soul. Do not

fail to show it in this matter, nor allow anyone to speak ill of you. In this instance, all the world will say you have acted cruelly, if you put to death six as worthy persons who of their own free will have given themselves up to your mercy, in order to save their fellow-citizens." Upon this, the King gave a wink, saying, "Be it so," and ordered the headsman to be sent for, for that the people of Calais had done him so much damage, it was proper they should suffer for it. The Queen of England fell on her knees, and with tears said, "Ah, gentle sir, since I have crossed the sea with great danger to see you, I have asked you one favour; now, I most humbly ask as a gift, for the sake of the Son of the Blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will be merciful to these six men." The King looked at her for some time in silence, and then said, "Ah, lady, I wish that you had been anywhere else than here. You have entreated in such a manner that I cannot refuse you. I therefore give them to you to do as you please with them."

The Queen conducted the six citizens to her apartments, and had the halters taken from round their necks, after which she new-clothed them, and served them with a splendid dinner. She then gave each six nobles, and had them escorted out of the camp in safety.

SIR JOHN FROISSART.

THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT.

Fair stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
 Longer will tarry,
But putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
 Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnished in warlike sort,
Marcheth towards Agincourt
 In happy hour ;
Skirmishing day by day
With those that stopped his way,
Where the French General lay
 With all his power.

Which in his height of pride
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide,
 To the King sending.
Which he neglects the while,
As from a nation vile,
Yet with an angry smile
 Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then,
"Though we be one to ten
 Be not amazed;
Yet have we well begun,
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
 By fame been raised."

"And for myself," quoth he,
"This my full rest shall be
England ne'er mourn for me,
 Nor more esteem me.
Victor I will remain,
Or on this earth lie slain,
Never shall she sustain
 Loss to redeem me."

Poitiers and Cressy tell
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell,
 No less our skill is,
Then when our grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat
By many a warlike feat
 Lopped the French lilies."

The Duke of York so dread,
The eager vanward led;

With the main Henry sped,
 Amongst his henchmen.
Exeter had the rear,
A braver man not there :
Heavens ! how hot they were
 On the false Frenchmen.

They now to fight are gone,
Armour on armour shone,
Drum now to drum did groan,
 To hear was wonder ;
That with the cries they make,
The very earth did shake ;
Trumpet to trumpet spake,
 Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,
Oh noble Erpingham,
Which did the signal aim
 To our hid forces.
When from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
 Struck the French horses.

With Spanish yew so strong,
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
 Piercing the weather ;
None from his fellow starts,

But playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts
 Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw,
And forth their bilbos drew,
And on the French they flew,
 Not one was tardy ;
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,
Down the French peasants went,—
 Our men were hardy.

This while our noble King ;
His broad sword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding,
 As to o'erwhelm it ;
And many a deep wound lent,
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
 Bruisèd his helmet.

Gloucester, that duke so good
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood
 With his brave brother,
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that famous fight,
 Scarce such another.

Warwick in blood did wade,
Oxford the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
 Still as they ran up :
Suffolk his axe did ply,
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bore them right doughtily,
 Ferrers and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's day
Was fought this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay
 To England to carry ;
Oh, when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
 Such a King Harry ?

MICHAEL DRAYTON, 1563-1631.

NOTE.—The Battle of Agincourt was fought on St. Crispin's Day, Oct. 25th, 1415, when the English under their King, Henry V., totally defeated a much larger French Army.

The fifth stanza of this ballad was quoted with fine effect in reference to Baden-Powell, just after the relief of Ladysmith, by the London "*Spectator*."

THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD.

NOTE.—The struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster for the English throne lasted from 1455 to 1485. The emblem of the Yorkists was a white rose, that of the Lancastrians was a red rose. Hence, this strife was called the Wars of the Roses.

The following lines are part of a poem celebrating the return of Henry, Lord Clifford, to his home, Brougham Castle. His father was on the Lancastrian side, and after the Battle of Wakefield, slew the son of the Duke of York, and was himself killed at Towton, 1461. Henry was deprived of his estates and lived as a shepherd until Henry VII. came to the throne and restored his possessions to him.

From town to town, from tower to tower,
The Red Rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The Red Rose is revived at last.
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming ;
Both Roses flourish, Red and White¹
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.
Joy, joy to both ; but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster !

¹Henry VII. was descended from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and by his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV. who was also Duke of York, the rival houses were united.

Behold her how she smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array.
Fair gree'ing doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall.
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored !

They came with banner, spear and shield ;
And it was proved in Bosworth field,¹
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood ;
St. George² was for us, and the might
Of blessèd angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the land has uttered forth
The loudest in the faithful North.
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming ;
Our strong abodes and castles see.
The glory of their loyalty.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

¹ The Battle of Bosworth Field was fought in 1485. There Henry VII., then Earl of Richmond, "the Avenger," defeated and killed Richard III., the last Yorkist King.

² St. George, the patron Saint of England.

THE ARMADA.

Attend, all ye who list to hear our noble England's
praise ;

I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in
ancient days,

When that great fleet invincible against her bore
in vain,

The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of
Spain.

It was about the lovely close of a warm summer's
day,

There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to
Plymouth Bay ;

Her crew had seen Castile's black fleet, beyond
Aurigny's isle,¹

At earliest twilight, on the waves lie heaving many
a mile,

At sunrise she escaped their van, by God's especial
grace,

And the tall Pinta till the noon had held her close
in chase.

Forthwith a guard at every gun was placed along
the wall ;

The beacon blazed upon the roof of Edgecumbe's
lefty hall !

¹ Alderney.

Many a light fishing bark put out to pry along the coast,

And with loose rein and bloody spur rode inland many a post.

With his white hair unbonneted, the stout old Sheriff comes ;

Behind him march the halberdiers ; before him sound the drums ;

His yeomen round the market cross make clear an ample space,

For there behoves him to set up the Standard of Her Grace.

And haughtily the trumpets peal, and gaily dance the bells,

As slow upon the labouring breeze the royal blazon swells.

Look how the Lion of the sea lifts up his ancient crown,

And underneath his deadly paw treads the gay lilies down.

So stalked he when he turned to flight, on that famed Picard field,¹

Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's eagle shield.

¹The Battle of Crecy, in Picardy, 1346. The King of Bohemia, his son the King of the Romans, and a body of Genoese bowmen fought on the side of France.

So glared he when at Agincourt in wrath he turned to bay,
And crushed and torn, beneath his paws, the princely hunters lay.

Ho, strike the flagstaff deep, Sir Knight ! Ho, scatter flowers, fair maids !
Ho, gunners, fire a loud salute ! Ho, gallants, draw your blades.
Thou sun, shine on her joyously, ye breezes, waft her wide,
Our glorious SEMPER EADEM,¹ the banner of our pride.

The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that banner's massy fold !
The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty scroll of gold ;
Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the purple sea,
Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again shall be.

From Eddystone to Berwick bounds, from Lynn to Milford Bay,
That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the day ;

¹ *Semper Eadem.* " Always the same."

For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly war-
flame spread,
High on St. Michael's Mount it shone ; it shone
on Beachy Head.

Far on the deep the Spaniard saw, along each
southern shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twink-
ling points of fire.

The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glitter-
ing waves,
The rugged miner poured to war from Mendip's
sunless caves ;
O'er Loughleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks,
the fiery herald flew :
He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the rangers
of Beaulieu.
Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out
from Bristol town.
And ere the day three hundred horse had met on
Clifton down.

The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into
the night,
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of
blood-red light ;
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the death-like
silence broke,

And with one start, and with one cry, the royal
city woke.

At once on all her stately gates arose the answer-
ing fires ;

At once the wild alarum clashed from all her reel-
ing spires.

From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud
the voice of fear ;

And all the thousand masts of Thames sent forth a
louder cheer ;

And from the farthest wards was heard the rush of
hurrying feet,

And the broad streams of pikes and flags rushed
down each roaring street.

And broader still became the blaze and louder still
the din.

As fast from every village round the horse came
spurring in.

And eastward straight from wild Blackheath the
warlike errand went,

And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant
Squires of Kent.

Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those
bright couriers forth ;

High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they
started for the north ;

And on and on, without a pause, untired they
bounded still ;

All night from tower to tower they sprang ; they
sprang from hill to hill.

Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Darwin's
rocky dales,

Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy
hills of Wales,

Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze on Malvern's
lonely height,

Till streamed in crimson on the wind the Wrekin's
crest of light.

Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's
stately fane,

And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er all the
boundless plain.

Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln
sent,

And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide
vale of Trent ;

Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's
embattled pile,

And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the
burghers of Carlisle.

.LORD MACAULAY.

THE BLACK PRINCE AT THE BATTLE OF CRECY.

Archbishop of Canterbury.—

Go, my dread lord, to your great-grandsires'¹
tomb,
From whom you claim ; invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great-uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground played a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France,
Whilst his most mighty father on a hill
Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp
Forage in blood of French nobility.
O noble English, that could entertain
With half their forces the full pride of France,
And let another half stand laughing by,
All out of work and cold for action.

The French King.—

Think we King Harry strong ;
And, Princes, look you strongly arm to meet him.
The kindred of him hath been fleshed upon us ;
And he is bred out of that bloody strain
That haunted us in our familiar paths ;

¹ Edward III., father of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who was the grandfather of Henry V.

Witness our too much memorable shame
 When Cressy battle fatally was struck,
 And all our princes captived by the hand
 Of that black name, Edward, Black Prince of
 Wales.

Whiles that his mountain sire, on mountain
 standing,

Up in the air, crowned with the golden sun,
 Saw his victorious seed, and smiled to see him
 Mangle the work of nature, and deface
 The patterns that by God and by French fathers
 Had twenty years been made. This is a stem
 Of that victorious stock ; and let us fear
 The native mightiness and fate of him.

“ *From Henry V.* ” WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.

ENGLAND'S STRENGTH.

This England never did, nor never shall,
 Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
 But when it first did help to wound itself.
 Now these her princes are come home again,
 Come the three corners of the world in arms,
 And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us
 rue

If England to herself do rest but true.

WILLIAM SHAKSPERE.